

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeder, comprising:  
a sheet accommodating section configured to accommodate therein a stack of sheets;  
a sheet pickup section configured to contact the stack of sheets and feed the sheets toward a feed path; and  
sheet separator located downstream of the sheet pickup section, the sheet separator including a feed roller and a reverse roller,  
wherein the reverse roller includes a sponge member having an outer periphery formed with a coating layer having a surface smoothed to such an extent as to have a gloss, and  
wherein the coating layer has a mean surface roughness Ra satisfying the following formula:

$$0.09 \leq Ra \leq 0.11.$$

2. (Original) The sheet feeder according to claim 1,  
wherein the coating layer is formed by dipping the sponge member into a coating liquid.

3. (Original) The sheet feeder according to claim 1,  
wherein the coating layer comprises urethane rubber.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The sheet feeder according to claim 1,  
wherein the sheet pickup section comprises a roller member having a hollow portion therein.

6. (Original) An image reading apparatus, comprising:  
a sheet feeder as recited in claim 1; and  
an image reading section configured to read an image formed on each of the sheets fed by the sheet feeder.

7. (Original) An image forming apparatus, comprising:  
an image reading apparatus as recited in claim 6; and  
an image forming section configured to form an image based on image data read by the image reading apparatus.

8. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus, comprising:  
a sheet feeder as recited in claim 1;  
an image reading section configured to read an image formed on each of the sheets fed by the sheet feeder; and  
an image forming section configured to form an image based on image data read by the image reading section apparatus.